

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claims 1-15 (canceled).

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16. (new) An operating head for an automatic machine tool having a structure movable along a set of three Cartesian axes, the operating head comprising a first support rotatably fitted to the structure for rotation about a first axis, a chuck unit fitted to the first support, the chuck unit projecting from the first support and being rotatable to different angular positions around a second axis, the chuck unit being removable from the first support.

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17. (new) An operating head according to claim 16, wherein the second axis is orthogonal to the first axis.

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18. (new) An operating head according to claim 16, wherein the first support includes a power transmission system and means for connecting the power transmission system to the chuck unit.

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19. (new) An operating head according to claim 18, wherein the chuck unit comprises a power chuck.

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20. (new) An operating head according to claim 18, wherein the chuck unit comprises a motorized chuck.

21. (new) An operating head according to claim 16, further comprising a rotating support fitted to the first support, the chuck unit being mounted on the rotating support, and the rotating support controllable by means for controlling rotation of the rotating support around the second axis.

22. (new) An operating head according to claim 21, further comprising a pair of couplings fitted on the rotating support, the pair of couplings connecting the chuck unit to electrical and hydraulic power supply devices, and a locking assembly on the rotating support locking the chuck unit to the rotating support.

23. (new) An operating head according to claim 22, wherein the locking assembly comprises grippers for engaging shanks integral with the rotating support.

24. (new) An operating head according to claim 21, wherein the power transmission system comprises a drive having shafts and bevel gear pairs, connected on one side to a motor system of the structure, and having a coupling on the other side for connection to kinematic devices provided on the chuck unit.

25. (new) An operating head according to claim 24, further comprising a ring-shaped chamber connected at one side to exhaust

devices and on the other side to a duct terminating adjacent the coupling of a tool, the ring-shaped chamber fitted to the structure.

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26. (new) An operating head according to claim 25, wherein the duct is connected to the ring-shaped chamber by a rapid coupling, the duct being integral with and rotatably connected to the chuck unit.

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27. (new) An operating head according to claim 21, further comprising a chamber having walls made of a deformable material is fitted around the rotating support, the chamber being connected to fluid means for introducing a pressurized fluid into the chamber.

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28. (new) An operating head according to claim 21, wherein the first support has means for controlling rotation of the rotating support around the second axis, the second axis being orthogonal to the first axis.

29. (new) An operating head for automatic machine tools comprising:

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a first support adapted for rotation about a first axis and mounted on a structure movable in a set of three Cartesian

axes;

a second support³ rotatably mounted to the first support for rotation about a second axis orthogonal to the first axis;

an interchangeable chuck unit, mounted to project from the second support; *see Fig 1*

a power transmission system having a coupling connected to a drive connected to a chuck of said chuck unit; *relant*

first means for controlling rotation of the second support about the second axis; and

second means for selectively locking the second support against rotation about the second axis.

30. (new) An operating head according to claim 29, wherein the second means comprises a chamber having walls made of a deformable material and fluid means for introducing a pressurized fluid into the chamber to deform the walls and frictionally lock the second support.

31. (new) An operating head for automatic machine tools, comprising:

a first support rotatably fitted on a structure, the first support rotatable around a first axis, the structure movable along a set of three Cartesian axes;

a second support fitted to the first support, the second

support being rotatable around a second axis;

an interchangeable chuck unit projecting from the second support;

first means for controlling the rotation of the second support around the second axis; and

no 1st mean for locking
second means for locking the second support in a rotated position, the second means including a chamber having walls made of a deformable material fitted around the second support, the chamber connected to a fluid means for introducing a pressurized fluid into the chamber for deforming the chamber walls and locking the second support in the rotated position.

32. An operating head according to claim 31, wherein the interchangeable chuck unit is one of a motorized chuck and a power chuck.